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THE LORD PROTECTING GREAT BRITAIN FOR HIS
OWN NAME'S SAKE. (P)

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED

AT THE LOCK CHAPEL,
AND AT
ST. MILDRED'S CHURCH, BREAD STREET,

On THURSDAY Nov. 29, 1798,

THE DAY OF THE LATE

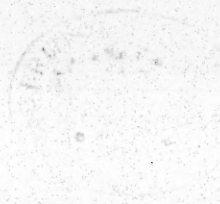
GENERAL THANKSGIVING.

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SERMON, &c.

Ezekiel xx. 22.

Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the heathen.

IT is of great importance to the Christian to possess a distinct and comprehensive knowledge of the doctrine of scripture, in respect of the Lord's providential dealings with nations who enjoy the light of revelation; and of his own duty in this particular. For this would supersede a variety of *questions* and *discussions*, which prevent numbers from joining cordially either in prayer for publick mercies, or thanksgivings for them when evidently vouchsafed. It would teach us to consider all creatures as instruments in the hand of Him “who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;” and shew us that our humiliation as sinners before him, or our gratitude for unmerited comforts, has nothing to do with our approbation, or disapprobation of men or measures; except as in case of approbation we have additional cause for gratitude, in case of disapprobation for deeper humiliation. (2 Sam. xxiv. 1. 2 Chron. ii. 11.)

Let it then be allowed, (and who can deny it?) that this nation has been peculiarly favoured by the merciful providence of God: and *waving* but by no means

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yielding

yielding the question concerning *publick measures*, I would ask such as continue *dissatisfied*, whether Elijah was the less bound to thank the Lord for his daily provision because it was sent him by ravens? whether David did wrong in blessing God for seasonable deliverance from the rage of Saul, because he could not approve the conduct of the Philistines, whose sudden invasion called away his persecutor?—or whether the primitive Christians, during 300 years under pagan emperors, generally of very bad character, and most of them persecutors, were never called on to thank the Lord for their share in publick peace or exemption from national calamities? Alas, in how few ages and places, if this reserve be admitted, have Christians been so much as required to be thankful for national mercies! How small a tribute of praise must our gracious God receive from his whole church in this behalf!

My brethren, we do not meet together at this time, to enquire what men have been doing; but what the Lord hath done for us as a guilty nation. “He hath
 “not dealt with us according to our sins, neither hath
 “he rewarded us after our iniquities:” but “he hath
 “withdrawn his hand, and wrought for his name’s
 “sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of
 “the heathen.” In prosecuting this subject, I shall,

I. Make some brief observations on the text, as illustrated by the Lord’s dealings with the nation of Israel.

II. More fully consider the words as applicable to the present circumstances of this our favoured land.

I. Then,

I. Then, I shall make some brief observations on the text, as illustrated by the Lord's dealings with the nation of Israel.

If we carefully weigh the import of a few remarkable passages of scripture, we shall find them throw much light on the subject, and prepare the way for all our subsequent enquiries. When Israel had made and worshipped the golden calf, the Lord said to Moses, " Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them ; and I will make of thee a great nation. And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power and with a mighty hand ? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out to slay them in the mountains ? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever ! And the Lord repented of the evil, which he thought to do unto his people." (Exod. xxxii. 9—14.) On this occasion, you perceive that he " withdrew his hand and wrought for his name's sake."—When the Israelites " despised the pleasant land, and believed not the word of the Lord," He said to Moses, " I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them.—And Moses said unto the

“ Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear of it ; for thou
 “ broughtest this people by thy might from among
 “ them : and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this
 “ land ; for they have heard that thou, Lord, art among
 “ this people, that thou, Lord, art seen face to face,
 “ and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou
 “ goest before them, by day-time in a pillar of a cloud,
 “ and in a pillar of fire by night.—Now if thou shalt
 “ kill all this people, as one man ; then the nations
 “ which have heard the fame of thee, will speak, saying,
 “ because the Lord was not able to bring this people
 “ into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he
 “ hath slain them in the wilderness.” (Numb. xiv.
 11—23.) In answer to this supplication the Lord again
 “ withdrew his hand, and wrought for his name’s sake,
 “ that it should not be polluted in the sight of the
 “ heathen.”

Joshua also pleaded in the same manner, when some
 of the people were slain by the men of Ai. “ O Lord,
 “ what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs be-
 “ fore their enemies ? For the Canaanites, and the
 “ inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall en-
 “ viron us round and shall cut off our name from the
 “ earth, and *what wilt thou do unto thy great name ?*”
 (Josh. vii. 7—9.)

The pious and animated address of David to Goliath
 was made at a time, when the conduct and measures of
 King Saul could not but be justly disapproved by all
 pious Israelites : yet he assigned the same reason, why
 the Lord would deliver Goliath into his hand, and the
 Philistines into the hands of Israel, namely, “ that al
 the

“ the earth may know that there is a God in Israel!” (1 Sam. xvii. 45—47.) Hezekiah’s plea, in prayer for deliverance from Sennacherib, and the Assyrians, was this, “ that all the kingdoms of the earth may know, “ that thou art the Lord God, even thou only.” (2 Kings xix. 15—19.)

The plea of Jeremiah, during a terrible drought, “ O “ Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do it “ for thy name’s sake ;” (Jer. xiv. 7.): and that of Daniel during the Babylonish captivity, (Dan. ix. 18, 19 ;) with very many others which might be adduced, abundantly teach us, that Israel, even when deserving the severest vengeance, was frequently placed in such circumstances, that the honour of God was concerned in sparing and delivering them.

The chapter, whence the text is chosen, introduces Jehovah recapitulating to the prophet, a variety of instances of this kind, and repeatedly subjoining, “ But “ I wrought for my name’s sake, that it should not be “ polluted before the heathen, among whom they “ were.” From this recapitulation we may observe, that the Lord had called Abraham, and had engaged to him, by covenant and by oath, to render his posterity exceedingly numerous, to give them the land of Canaan, and to raise up the Messiah from among them: and that he had ratified this engagement in the same manner to Isaac and Jacob. But when the descendants of these patriarchs had been increased to a vast multitude in Egypt, they had so degenerated from the piety of their ancestors, and had become so vile by their iniquities and idolatries, that they justly deserved destruction,

struction, at the very time when the Lord had purposed their deliverance. Yet if he had cut them off by some tremendous judgment, or left them in Egyptian bondage; the honour of his faithfulness and mercy would have been tarnished; his promise would have been broken, his covenant would have failed, and his whole plan concerning the Messiah have been disconcerted. He therefore, spared and delivered them, though unworthy, for his own name's sake.

The Lord had sent to Pharaoh, calling Israel his son, yea, his first born, and he demanded of him to "let his son go that he might serve him:" but Pharaoh haughtily replied, "Who is Jehovah? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go." Thus the contest was begun; and not only the Egyptians, but ere long all the neighbouring nations, were fixed in attention waiting for the event. Now, if the Lord, provoked by Israel's sin, had desisted from his demand and had left the people in bondage, Pharaoh would have *seemed* victorious, and he as well as others would have concluded that Jehovah was unable to deliver his people. The honour of his eternal power and Godhead was therefore concerned in effecting their deliverance.

When this had been accomplished by "a mighty hand and an out-stretched arm," and the laws, ordinances, and oracles of Jehovah had been communicated to them, they renewed their rebellions, and by most aggravated crimes provoked the Lord to keep them forty years in the wilderness, till nearly all that generation was dead. But if he had cut them off entirely, and had not put the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and
 Jacob

Jacob in possession of Canaan ; not only would his oath and promise have failed, but the Egyptians, Canaanites, and surrounding nations would have blasphemed his great name, as if he had been unable to fulfil his engagements, and thus likewise they would have been hardened in their idolatry and wickedness.

During a long course of years, after the nation was settled in Canaan, the interest, and almost the existence, of true religion in the world, was, according to the plan of infinite wisdom, inseparable from the preservation of Israel, as a distinct people : and how great soever their provocations were, the honour of God was thus concerned in preventing the complete success of their idolatrous neighbours against them, though they were used as scourges for their frequent and severe chastisement. Nor, till the coming of the promised Messiah, could it consist with the glory of the Lord, to pour out his vengeance upon the nation, and wholly to deprive them of their distinguished advantages. But after that event, his plan no more required their preservation as his visible church ; and so wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

There was likewise, through every age, a pious remnant in the land, to whom the promises especially belonged, and with whom the covenant was ratified. These persons prayed continually in behalf of the church and nation, according to the examples before adduced : and the honour of God required, that such prayers should be answered, and that his promises should be fulfilled to those who thus laid hold on his covenant. On all these accounts Jehovah “ withdrew his hand,
and

“ and wrought for his name’s sake, that it should not
 “ be polluted in the sight of the heathen:” otherwise,
 the crimes of Israel were so numerous and heinous, that
 he would have permitted their insulting enemies to
 effect their destruction; nay, he would immediately
 by his own power have made them like unto Sodom
 and Gomorrah.—We proceed,

II. More particularly to consider the words of
 the text, as applicable to the present circumstances
 of these nations. And,

(1) I shall take this occasion to recapitulate, in a
 compendious manner, what God hath wrought in our
 behalf, since the beginning of the present convulsions
 in Europe: and while the several particulars are no-
 ticed, it will, I think, appear evident to every serious
 mind, that the Lord himself hath graciously interposed
 in our behalf. “ If it had not been the Lord who was
 “ on our side, now may Israel say; if it had not been
 “ the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up
 “ against us: then they had swallowed us up quick,
 “ when their wrath was kindled against us. Then the
 “ waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone
 “ over our soul. Blessed be the Lord who hath not
 “ given us over for a prey unto their teeth.” (Ps. cxxiv.)

It is well known, that soon after the commencement
 of these bloody contests, which have wasted Europe,
 and destroyed many millions of her inhabitants, Great
 Britain was especially marked out as the victim of that
 power, whom God has employed as his scourge among
 the nations. Our prosperity was envied, our wealth,
 commerce,

commerce, and naval prowess were coveted, and bitter resentment for supposed injuries was avowed. Yet, while the nations of Europe, with but few exceptions, have witnessed and experienced, in a most tremendous manner, the horrors and miseries of war; we have, during a course of years, had peace in our borders. Doubtless our excessive affluence, the fuel and incentive of as excessive pride and luxury, hath been diminished; and many hardships have been felt by numbers, who are entitled to our sympathy and assistance: but our cities have not been reduced to ruinous heaps by dreadful sieges; we have not seen our streets flowing with human blood or strewed with mangled bodies; nor have we heard the piercing groans of the wounded and dying, nor the more durable lamentations of their distressed survivors. We are most of us *happily* unable to form a conception of the terrors and miseries, incident to *the seat of war*; or of the scenes which are witnessed, when an insulting victorious army prescribes scarcely any bounds to rapine, cruelty, and brutal lust. Nor have desolated fields, and the smoking ruins of towns and villages, pained our eyes, when we have had occasion to journey through the country. Oh, my brethren, nothing can give us an adequate idea of the tremendous horrors of this scourge of God! Even those, who professedly record the history of battles and sieges, draw a veil over the frightful scenes, from which the imagination would otherwise turn with disgust and terror; or rather they embellish them with the false glitter of military glory, and the splendid achievements of particular warriors. But the attentive enquirer will learn enough

from various facts and circumstances, to value a land of peace above all temporal good ; and, if piously disposed, to bless God for such a privilege, whatever it cost, and whatever loss or burden he sustain in order to preserve it.

That hidden fire also, which unexpectedly burst forth in such tremendous convulsions on the continent, has been clearly proved to have *abounded* at the same period in this country : and many symptoms caused great alarms of insurrections, civil wars, revolutions, and massacres, like those which have been, in some respects, even more horrible than war itself, in a neighbouring country : while the consciousness of ingratitude for our peculiar privileges increased our apprehensions concerning the event. Yet during so many years the Lord hath preserved us ; and very little indeed hath occurred *in this island*, to cause the shedding of human blood, either by the sword of war, or by that of the executioner. For “ he that stilleth the raging of the sea,” hath hitherto repressed the madness of the people : and great is the debt of gratitude we owe him on that account.

Whatever advantages may eventually arise from the dreadful transactions on the Continent ; (for doubtless God will overrule them for some wise and gracious purpose ;) all, who love the holy day of the Lord, the ordinances of his courts, and the liberty of attending on them without interruption, must, if properly informed, have felt great anxiety about the event. The legal abolition of the Christian sabbath, the substitution of a heathen decade, and the shutting up, wholly or in part, very many places of worship, on various political pretences,

pretences, wherever the enemy hath obtained the ascendancy ; when considered as connected with the most avowed infidelity and even atheism, and the determined enmity against Christianity, which distinguished many of the principal actors in those scenes, had a very dismal aspect on our religious privileges, on the condition in this respect of our posterity, and on the interests of religion in this land, in case our enemies had prevailed in the contest. But hitherto the Lord hath preserved us from every kind and degree of persecution, and we have full liberty to worship God according to our consciences, at whatever time and in whatever place we chuse. While this is the case, and our Bibles, our sabbaths, and our religious privileges are continued to us ; we must be shamefully *carnal* and *ungrateful*, if merely temporal difficulties or burdens induce us to refuse our tribute of thanksgiving to the Author of all our mercies.

The enemies, with whom we have sustained so long and severe a contest, have been indeed most wonderfully successful in their designs, and in many cases they have prevailed against our forces : yet they have been uniformly baffled in all their attempts against this island, and its essential dependencies ! Surely then the Lord hath “ wrought for his own name’s sake,” and has a right to our tribute of grateful praise.

At the crisis, when the fleet under Lord Howe gained a most decided victory, the state of things at home, as well as the designs of our foreign enemies, might have rendered such a victory, if gained by them, of very dreadful consequence to us : for in all probability an

invasion would in that case have been immediately attempted, with vastly greater prospect of success than it could be at present. And we should in every instance remember, that we are called on to be thankful, not only for success and its effects, but for preservation from the consequences of a defeat.

Not to dwell on the advantages derived from the victory obtained by Lord St. Vincent, which were very important ; let us recollect, that on one occasion, when the enemy made an attempt to land in Ireland, the unfavourable weather and contrary winds rendered it impracticable for our fleets to pursue them ; and many were either dissatisfied or alarmed on that account. Yet by those very winds, and that unfavourable weather, the Lord completely frustrated the design, without our help. He seemed to say to us, ‘ I have employed, ‘ and mean to employ, the conduct and valour of your ‘ admirals, officers, and seamen, for your preservation ; ‘ and you are prone to give them the glory, and to ‘ confide in them : on this occasion therefore, I preserve ‘ you immediately by myself, that you may see and ‘ acknowledge my hand, and ascribe to me the honour ‘ due to my name.’

Immediately before the Lord was pleased to make use of our fleets, in the most signal manner, for our preservation ; he gave us, by the *mutiny among the seamen*, the most convincing demonstration how easily he could have made them the instruments of our destruction. It was indeed a most astonishing interposition of providence, that during that very alarming period, the fleets of the enemy were kept in port ; and that the mutineers
did

did not unanimously concur in the designs of several among them, by carrying our vessels to some hostile harbour.

It is, I believe, generally understood, that before the victory gained by Lord Duncan, the Dutch admiral had embarked troops and stores, in order that he might convey them to Ireland, if the passage were open. But not being able to elude the English fleet, he put back into harbour; and having disembarked the troops, he was sent forth by the ruling powers, to risk a battle, in hopes at least of clearing the way for the purposed invasion. Had he therefore at that time gained as decisive a victory, as the Lord gave our fleet, he would doubtless have accomplished his design: and subsequent transactions have sufficiently shewn us, how greatly that event was to be dreaded.

The malecontents in Ireland are now known to have held correspondence with the French Directory, and to have received assurances from them of effectual assistance; and the time was fixed when it was supposed the nation would be ripe for open rebellion, and when the promised succours should be sent. But by some means the parties seem to have misunderstood each other, so that the Irish were under the necessity of rising, before their allies were ready to support them. Four squadrons however were actually prepared at different ports, to form one fleet for the invasion of Ireland, in the beginning of this summer: but by various occurrences they were all providentially retarded, till the critical season of probable success was elapsed; and at last they were not able to unite, but sailing separately, were one
after

after another, either taken, dispersed, or driven back without effecting any thing ! Who can help seeing the hand of God in these events ? For if this armament, at the first breaking out of the Irish rebellion, had landed the officers, troops, and stores they were intended to convey ; the most dreadful consequences might have followed : and the nearness of Ireland to this country might have rendered it like a fire-ship in the centre of a fleet. Nothing, during the whole of these dangers and troubles, appeared to me more alarming than the breaking out of the Irish rebellion ; and for no single circumstance have we more cause to be thankful, than that it has been suppressed, with no worse consequences to Great Britain.

The surprising success of the enemy on the Continent, and the disposition of the contending powers, to make the best terms they could with the conquerors ; when considered in connection with the vast preparations that were making, and the boasting menaces thrown out against this country, excited in the spring many serious apprehensions, that an invasion would actually be attempted ; and whatever might be the success, various distressing consequences must have followed. Most of us expected a turbulent summer ; yet, through the mercy of God, we have never enjoyed more tranquillity. Whatever induced the enemy to send so large an armament into Egypt, instead of exerting their whole force against Great Britain and Ireland ; we have reason to be very thankful, that they were disposed to take another course, and to leave us in peace and quietness.

I am

I am wholly incompetent to speak of the probable consequences to be expected from the most seasonable and most decisive victory gained by Lord Nelson : but contrasted with the supposition of the French fleet having obtained such a victory over ours, they must be almost incalculable. The diminution of their naval force and the increase of our's, in so great a degree ; and the probable disappointment of their plans against our distant commerce, and to deprive us of one great source of that wealth, by which we have been hitherto, by the blessing of God, enabled to maintain our national independence, seems to be only a small part of the advantage. The effects produced on the minds of the European powers, on those of our own countrymen, and even on those of the enemy, are doubtless very great ; and the prospect of our being able to weather out the dreadful storm is proportionably augmented.

The revolution in France, and the new principles and sentiments circulated on that occasion, excited in most parts of Europe an enthusiastical eagerness for *liberty*, which resembled *intoxication*, or the *delirium* of a fever. I would by no means speak against true liberty, and the rational love of it ; or the endeavour to improve and secure the measure which we possess by every regular and proper means ; or even the sober attempt to communicate the blessing to others. But the liberty, lately contended for, was utterly incompatible with the state of regular society, and the lapsed condition of human nature ; it was indeed such a *liberty*, as was never *established* in any nation, since the beginning of the world, nor ever will be while the earth remains. In this *deli-*

rium

rium multitudes, in different countries, were ready to join the enemy, in violently subverting their ancient governments, and in substituting an untried system, devised by self-sufficient inexperienced speculators, who began by treating the wisdom of former ages with profound contempt. In consequence of these hasty resolves, *the tree of liberty* has been planted very extensively; and now that it has produced very different fruit from what men expected, it is too late to root it up, and to *restore the former state of things, with the prospect of a gradual and rational amelioration*. But through the mercy of God, we have been preserved, till the *delirium* has in some measure subsided; and till most men have seen quite enough of the effects of *French principles* reduced to practice under *French patronage*, to cure them of all predilection for them. I apprehend, that by this time, almost every honest man, however he may disapprove of the state of things here in Britain, would protest against a change, to be effected in that manner, by which some neighbouring nations have been liberated from their former rulers. Now to be preserved so long in such a destructive storm, and until it begins to subside, is a mercy which should excite abundant gratitude and praise.

That union which at present prevails among us, in a determination to withstand the designs of innovators and invaders, and in bearing the necessary burdens, is a very hopeful symptom, that the Lord will yet prolong our tranquillity at home, and at length restore peace to the nations, in a measure by our means. We are indeed still at a great distance from that state of
affairs,

affairs, which every humane and pious person must long and pray for : yet hitherto the Lord hath preserved us, beyond our expectations, and contrary to the confident predictions of many, who foreboded nothing short of our immediate destruction.

Among our many mercies, we must by no means overlook the very plentiful harvest which the Lord has vouchsafed us, and the reduced price of almost all kinds of provisions. When I travelled through the country in June, I was ready to say, ‘ What a beautiful prospect do the fields present ? But who can tell whether ‘ we shall reap the harvest, or enjoy the abundance of a ‘ bountiful providence ?’ The harvest however is safely gathered in, and we are preserved in peace to enjoy our plenty : and at the same time, we have been exempted from those dreadful pestilential diseases, which have raged with destructive force in some parts of the world. “ Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of “ men. And let them sacrifice the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and tell out his works with gladness.”

Each of the circumstances enumerated bears evident marks of the Lord’s merciful interposition in our behalf : but the whole viewed together so conclusively demonstrates it, that I cannot understand how any pious man, whatever his peculiar sentiments may be, can help seeing and owning that God hath wrought these things, and that all parties ought to join in praise and thanksgiving to his holy name.

(2.) I would next enquire in what sense the Lord hath “ *withdrawn his hand, and wrought for his name’s*

“ *fake*, that it should not be polluted in the sight of “ the heathen ;” as the words may be applicable to the subject before us.

My brethren, we are here reminded, not to look to instruments and second causes, so as to forget the Author of our deliverances. Let admirals, officers, seamen, and all concerned, have due commendation and liberal rewards: but let us not give to them that honour which belongs to God alone. Neither let us ascribe our safety to our insular situation, to our national spirit, the fidelity and loyalty of this or the other order of men, to our powerful fleets, or our naval skill and prowess: for we have had sufficient proof, that these confidences must have failed us, and hastened our ruin, if the Lord himself had not been our protector. Let us then acknowledge his goodness, as well in bestowing on us our peculiar advantages, as in making use of them for our preservation in the crisis of danger.

But we must be at least equally careful not to consider our success as in any degree the recompence of our own righteousness: for did the occasion permit, it would be easy for me to lead your attention through a variety of scenes, descriptive of our national character, and exhibiting such ungodliness and wickedness in every rank and order of the community, as would fully prepare your minds for the alarming enquiry, “ Shall not I visit “ for these things? saith the Lord; and shall not my “ soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” A man must either be very ignorant of the state of things in this country, or he must judge of them by a very different

ferent rule than the word of God ; not to be convinced that, at the very time when each of the mercies before enumerated was bestowed, the Lord might very justly have executed vengeance upon us by the most desolating judgments. My brethren, the ministers of Christ, do not mean, on this occasion, to retract the reproofs and warnings, which they have repeatedly given on the days appointed for humiliation, fasting, and prayer : but rather to use the consideration of our national guilt, in order to set off and commend the rich mercy of God, in sparing and delivering us. We do not indeed wish to palliate the crimes of our enemies, which have been most enormous : but “ are there not with us also sins “ against the Lord our God,” of a very aggravated nature ? Sins not in the least repented of, but obstinately persisted in, against the fullest conviction, and the most solemn warnings ? And, considering all our religious advantages, it is not easy for us to determine which nation has most deeply provoked the anger of Almighty God. We may indeed adopt the words of Moses to Israel—“ Speak thou not in thine heart, after that the “ Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, “ saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought “ me in to possess this land. But for the wickedness “ of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from “ before thee. Not for thy righteousness, nor for the “ uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go in to possess “ the land ; but for the wickedness of these nations the “ Lord thy God doth drive them out from before “ thee.” (Deut. ix. 5—8.) Many reasons might be assigned, why the Lord should interpose in our behalf, for the honour of his own name : yet our

national character and conduct, as in any sense *entitling* us to such a favour, is not one of them: but they are all exactly similar to those assigned in the chapter of our text, why the Lord spared Israel, while their sins called loudly for his vengeance upon them.

It hath pleased our gracious God to send the light of his gospel into this land: and, notwithstanding all our heinous crimes, we have not by any *national act* in any degree renounced the profession of Christianity. On the contrary, the holy scriptures are so far had in honour, that they are *by authority* read continually in every part of the land; and by various ways copies of them are multiplied, and dispersed among all ranks in the community. Some degree of regard is still paid to the holy day of God; and very many instances, in which it is profaned, directly violate the law of the land, as well as break God's commandment: while provision is also made, that publick worship should be every where maintained, and divine ordinances regularly administered. These things, in some circumstances, might avail us very little, if at all; and no doubt they tend exceedingly to aggravate the guilt of multitudes. But we are now contending with an enemy, which hath, by *publick national acts* virtually abrogated the Christian sabbath, treated the scriptures with marked contempt, and almost wholly renounced Christianity: while many of the principal actors in these scenes have vented the most daring blasphemies against the Lord Jesus himself; nay, have in the *very senate*, uttered, *with general approbation*, the language of the most unqualified atheism! Now if the Lord should permit this people, in such a spirit, to succeed in their designs against this land;

land ; they would be emboldened in their impiety, insult over our religion, and consider themselves as prospered in their determination to cast off the yoke of Christ, and subvert his cause in the world. If therefore, the Lord should at length determine to punish us according to our deserts ; it seems probable, that he will not employ our present enemies for that purpose ; or that he will previously reduce them to another state of mind, and lead those in authority to protest against the blasphemies, and repeal the laws, of their predecessors, against Christ and his holy religion. “ I said, I
 “ would scatter them into corners, I would make the
 “ remembrance of them to cease from among men :
 “ were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest
 “ their adversaries should behave themselves strangely ;
 “ and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the
 “ Lord hath not done all this.” (Deut. xxxii. 22—28.)

The Assyrians not only conquered the surrounding gentile nations, but likewise the idolatrous kingdom of Israel ; and Sennacherib thought he had prevailed against the God of Israel : but when he attacked Judah, where true religion was supported and countenanced by authority ; the honour of Jehovah was concerned in effectually silencing the boastings and blasphemies of the insulting invader ; notwithstanding the hypocrisy and enormous wickedness of great numbers of the Jewish nation.

I cannot on this occasion conceal the satisfaction I felt, in comparing the letter of our British admiral, with the dispatches from the French general in Egypt, which arrived about the same time. ‘ It hath pleased
 ‘ Almighty God to give a great victory to his Majesty’s
 fleet,

‘ fleet,’ says the victorious Nelson, whose courage and conduct have excited universal admiration; thus rationally ascribing the glory to the Lord of hosts himself: on the other hand, the French commander states, that (*in waging war against superstition,*) he and his soldiers unite in the celebration of *Mahometan festivals*: he throws the blame of the defeat of the French fleet on the *destinies*; yet, speaking of *Fortune* as a real person, he makes her *his deity*, and says, she favoured him as long as it was necessary! So long as God is thus openly acknowledged by us, and despised or defied by our enemies; we may hope, that, “ he will withdraw his hand, “ and work for his name’s sake, that it should not be “ polluted in the fight of the heathen.”

Indeed I cannot but entertain some prevailing confidence, that the example of so distinguished a character as Lord Nelson, will produce further good effects in this particular; and lead numbers, who have hitherto inconsiderately spoken another language, not only to acknowledge the hand of God by suitable words, but to consider, that he alone gives capacity for every undertaking, and crowns our endeavours with desired success.

From the era of the Reformation to this present time, it hath pleased God to make this nation one principal support of the Protestant religion; which may be considered, with alas, not many exceptions, as the cause of Christianity itself. On this account likewise his glory hath been concerned in our protection; formerly against the vehement assaults of popish powers, and lately against the designs of infidels and atheists: for could either of these parties have accomplished their avowed designs

designs respecting us; the interests of true religion in Europe would, as far as we can see, have been greatly endangered. The Lord hath indeed frequently made use of such enemies for our severe correction: but "he hath not delivered us over as a prey unto their teeth." How long, however, our preservation may be necessary for the accomplishment of his wise and righteous purposes, we cannot tell: and, unless a great change should take place in our national character, he will, when his plan no longer requires us, cast us off; as he did the Jews after the coming of Christ, and the propagation of the gospel among the gentiles.

There is likewise in these nations, as there was in Israel of old, even in the worst of times, a remnant of true believers; and this little flock enjoys security and liberty of conscience. Now it is reasonable to suppose, that the honour of God is, in many cases at least, concerned, to defend a country where his people are protected and countenanced. Indeed it may be questioned whether any nation can be said to *have filled up its measure of iniquity*, while a considerable number of true believers remain in it, and are unmolested by persecution. The Christians had long been cruelly persecuted by the Jews, and had separated entirely from them, before the predicted vengeance was poured out upon that devoted nation.

The number of real Christians in Britain, though small in comparison of the inhabitants at large, would, I trust, if collected together, form a very considerable company. All these truly repent of their own sins, and are humbled for them as a part of our national guilt; they

they all “ sigh and mourn for the abominations ” that prevail ; they protest against them, and endeavour in some measure to counteract them. They are decidedly on the Lord’s part in the midst of the abounding infidelity, iniquity, and impiety of the nation ; and, according to the degree of their faith, grace, and knowledge of the scriptures, they pray for the peace of the land in which they enjoy peace. They pretend not indeed to intercede with the energy and success of Abraham ; or of Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Daniel, or others, who prevailed in prayer for Israel of old : but they use the same plea, both in their own behalf, and in behalf of the nation ; and beseech the Lord to spare and deliver us, for the honour of his name, “ that it should not be polluted in the sight of “ the heathen.”

Several ministers have united, within the course of the year, to excite their own and each other’s congregations, to pray earnestly for our beloved country, in these perilous and critical times : and, while infidels deride, and mere politicians overlook, such means of national preservation ; it is afflictive to observe, that some, whom we would consider as brethren, have misunderstood us, and have supposed that we meant to excite people to pray for the *destruction of our enemies, and the gratification of national ambition, rapacity, or resentment, by bloody victories.* But, I think, I may answer for most of those concerned, and probably for every individual ; that to be preserved from invasions, civil wars, and persecutions ; and to have the invaluable blessing of religious light and liberty continued to us
and

and to our posterity, has formed the substance of our united supplications in this respect. We should have been rejoiced, if the rulers of France would have formed devices, so salutary to themselves and safe to their neighbours, that we could explicitly and cordially have besought the Lord to prosper them : but if they will persist in attempting to make this country the seat of war, to inundate it with blood, to overturn our government, and destroy our religion ; we must continue to pray, ‘ Abate their pride, alluage their malice, and *‘ confound their devices.’* We have prayed especially for peace ; and it would have gratified every feeling of our hearts, to have been secured from the dangers which impended over us, without the loss of a single life : but if the Lord God of our salvation sees good to answer us, “ by terrible things in righteousness,” “ who are we that we should reply against God ?” Hezekiah and Isaiah doubtless would have preferred the softening, humbling, and changing of Sennacherib’s heart, to the destruction of his army : but if he continue to boast, menace, and blaspheme ; and the Lord declare, that he will “ put a hook in his nose, and a “ bridle in his lips, and turn him back by the way in “ which he came ;” and if it please the fountain of wisdom and justice to do this, even by the awful destruction of an hundred and eighty five thousand men : shall the protected and delivered servants of God quarrel with him on this account, or refuse to render him their tribute of grateful praise ? I trust, numbers have prayed in the spirit of humble faith, and love, and zeal for the honour of God and the interests of true religion :

and verily the Lord hath heard us, he hath hitherto confounded the devices of our enemies, and hath preserved peace in our borders. The honour of his name, we trust, rendered it proper for him to answer the prayers of his people; while with one consent many thousands pleaded, "O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake." On all these accounts therefore he hath withdrawn his hand: and notwithstanding our provocations we are preserved, for the same reasons which induced him to spare and protect the nation of Israel during many revolving ages.

(3) I proceed therefore, in the last place, to deduce some practical instructions from the preceding view of our national mercies and our present circumstances. In doing this we must particularly advert to the special object of this day appointed for publick thanksgiving. We are, my brethren, met together, to return thanks to Almighty God, not for the restoration of peace and the prospect of permanent tranquillity; but for preservation in the midst of a most perilous and destructive war: and even this preservation must be ascribed to the Lord's special unmerited mercy shewn to a most guilty land, for the purposes of his own glory. We cannot therefore consistently give the least countenance to that spirit of boasting, exulting, and vaunting ourselves, or our countrymen, above others, which is natural to men amidst signal successes. A consistent Christian, will be pained to hear of *Britain's ruling the waves*; for he knows that the Lord alone possesses the sovereign authority

rity over the sea and the dry land ; and gives dominion to whom he pleases, and for what term of time he pleases. He cannot listen with *patience*, much less with *pleasure*, to vain glorious declamations on the great things *we* have done, or the honour and glory of Britain among the nations ; for he knows, that “ Except
 “ the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small rem-
 “ nant, we should have been like Sodom and Gomor-
 “ rah.” “ The Lord ” indeed, “ hath done great
 “ things for us, for which we rejoice,” with humble gratitude and admiration : and he hath enabled many of our countrymen to fill up their places in a proper manner, and hath honoured them as his instruments in our preservation. To him therefore belongs glory and praise ; but to us “ belong shame and confusion of face,” for our numerous and heinous provocations. “ It is of
 “ the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed :” and our mutual congratulations, as well as thanksgivings, should be tempered with deep humility and self-abasement.

A confident spirit too is peculiarly unsuitable to our character and situation. We have been indeed hitherto preserved from shipwreck in a most tremendous storm, during which many have been dashed on the rocks or sunk in the ocean : but the hurricane still rages, and may soon, for what we *know*, become more furious than ever. The very means, by which God hath hitherto preserved us, may easily be turned against us : and we are in all respects entirely in the hands of Him, ‘ who for our sins is most justly displeased.’ “ Rejoice
 “ with trembling ” should therefore be our motto.—
 Even if peace on the most desirable terms were ratified ;

the man, who judges according to the Bible, would not think our condition by any means safe; so long as a general reformation of manners and an effectual revival of religion have not taken place, and so long as even sanctioned injustice, oppression, and cruelty, however protested against, still maintain their ground. The *particular call of the day* is to bless and praise the Lord for his mercies: but the *general call of the times* is to “weeping and mourning, and girding with sack-cloth.” We may indeed humbly hope, that he who “hath delivered, and doth deliver, will yet deliver” us: but we should beware of self-confidence; or confidence in our national resources, our fleets and armies, our valour and good policy, or in an arm of flesh however exerted. And we ought at least to be equally upon our guard against a presumptuous confidence, like that of the Jews, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these;” while no care is taken to “amend our ways and our doings:” from a vain imagination that the Lord will certainly deliver us, even though we continue to act, as if we thought ourselves delivered on purpose to proceed in our rebellious courses. For my part, I shall never think the danger over, till a general endeavour be manifested among all ranks and orders of men in the land, to promote the cause of genuine Christianity, in *principle and practice*, through their several circles; attended by a conscientious performance of the duties of their several places, and improvement of their various talents, to the honour of God and the good of men: and till a general protest be entered against every species of infidelity, impiety, oppression, venality,

venality, and profligacy. For the invasion of the land by these spreading evils, is far more formidable to the spiritual mind, than even that of the most numerous and well appointed armies of enraged enemies; and indeed it is now making more dire havock among men's souls, than the French themselves have hitherto made of their bodies.

It is likewise peculiarly incumbent on us, to watch against all impatience under the pressures of the times. We should compare our burdens, losses, and trials, with those which we have deserved, and which have actually desolated many other countries: and thus, while we cannot but feel, that the war has greatly impoverished and distressed numbers, and still bears very heavily on us; the spirit of murmuring will give place to that of patience, contentment, and lively gratitude. Indeed this is the grand difficulty, in respect of the service we are now engaged in. For while pride and love of worldly objects prevail in men's hearts; and the state of things exceedingly impedes their desired success, and involves them in manifold difficulties and straits; it is vain to expect that they will be truly and durably thankful for the most evident interpositions of a merciful providence, to preserve them from vastly more dreadful calamities. And as even pious Christians are far from that depth of humility and fervency of spiritual affections, which become their character and situation: the same causes render them proportionably prone to impatience, and backward to the sweet duty of praise and thanksgiving. Hence it arises, that it is more difficult to prevail with men in general, to unite cordially
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in this *most reasonable service*, than perhaps in any other : and *unfeigned gratitude* to God, in some measure proportioned to his unmerited inestimable benefits, is almost, if not absolutely, the most uncommon attainment in the world. But the due consideration of the evil and desert of sin ; of our own exceeding sinfulness ; of the miseries which a just and merciful God is pleased to inflict on our fallen race in this world, and to threaten in another ; on the riches of redeeming love, and the sufferings of the divine Saviour ; on the privileges and prospects of the real Christian, and his infinite obligations to the God of his salvation, which are daily and hourly accumulating ; and on the blessed inheritance reserved for him in heaven, after the light and momentary afflictions of this present world : These reflections, I say, are suited to counteract our propensity to ingratitude, to repress our murmurs, and to make us fervent in thankfulness, when otherwise we might repine in proud and sullen discontent.

We should likewise, my brethren, consider, how the view we have taken of the subject suggests the most powerful motives and encouragements to *persevering importunity in prayer*. Yet it is to be feared, that many, who, in the crisis of danger and alarm, felt the propriety of joining in this important service, are grown slack in wrestling with God for the land, even in consequence of having apparently begun to prevail ! But is not this most unreasonable, as well as ungrateful ? Surely the language of the Psalmist contains the proper sentiment on this occasion ; “ I love the Lord, because he hath
“ heard my voice, and my supplication ; because he
“ hath

“ hath inclined his ear unto me ; *therefore will I call*
 “ *upon him as long as I live.*” (Ps. cxvi. 1, 2.) And
 the words of the Apostle form our proper instruction ;
 “ Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with
 “ thanksgiving. (Col. iv. 2.) Let us then, beloved,
 not only *persist*, in publick, in our families, and our clo-
 sets, (*daily*, but more copiously, if we have opportunity,
 on *the Lord's day*,) to beseech the Lord to spare our
 guilty land, and to avert the calamities that still threaten
 us : but let us also take courage to hope and pray for
 still more abundant and important blessings ; for “ the
 “ effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth
 “ much ;” and, “ if two *of you*,” (of Christ's true dis-
 ciples,) “ shall agree on earth, as touching any thing
 “ that they shall ask ; it shall be done for them of my
 “ Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. xviii. 19, 20.)

It may, perhaps, be useful here to remark, that Isaiah,
 whose prayer availed so much against the power of the
 proud blaspheming Sennacherib ; when he saw the glory
 of Israel's God and witnessed the adorations of the ex-
 alted seraphim, cried out, “ Woe is me, for I am un-
 “ done, for I am a man of unclean lips :” and that
 before Job was honoured to be the appointed and ac-
 cepted intercessor for his friends, he was brought to
 say, “ I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”
 Let none then from conscious and lamented unworthi-
 ness yield to discouragement in praying for the land, or
 in expecting a gracious answer to their feeble supplica-
 tions. One foldier indeed can do little towards resisting
 an invading army : but if every foldier *on that pretence*
 deserted his post, the land would be left defenceless : in
 like

like manner every Christian, who on this or any other ground, refuses to join his prayers in this emergency, deserts his post ; and did all his brethren imitate the example, our land would be left exposed and defenceless indeed !

While some persuade themselves that the obstructions to a safe and desirable peace are few and small ; others seem to think, that they are and must for a long time continue absolutely insurmountable. But, whatever they may be, if the whole company of Christians in Britain could be induced to unite in fervent prayer for this most desirable blessing, in behalf of this land, and of the harassed nations on the continent ; I am persuaded we should soon be called upon to join in thanksgivings for peace. If we wrestle and prevail with God, as Jacob did, we shall also prevail with men. How effectually did Nehemiah's ejaculation, " O Lord give me " favour in the fight of this man," avail to the restoration of the almost hopeless state of Jerusalem and Judah ! " When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his " enemies to be at peace with him ;" and, we have ground from our success hitherto, to expect confidently, that he will hear our supplications in this respect also, and dispose the hearts of our enemies cordially to desire peace ; or place those in authority who are desirous of it ; or by some other means remove every obstacle, though to us it appear an immoveable mountain. And it would I own give me far greater satisfaction to have the prayers of the church of God in Britain considered, as the means of restoring peace to the nations, than as availing for the most brilliant victories. Nay, I feel no
hesitation

hesitation in adding, that I should unspeakably more rejoice, if God would dispose and assist us to pray, and answer our prayers, for poor, oppressed, and almost desolated France, and send to its inhabitants the blessings of peace, true rational liberty, good government, and the gospel of salvation; than to see her prostrate at the feet of Britain, supplicating peace on the most humiliating terms.

But let us not stop even here, my brethren: Let us also take encouragement from past success, to pray more earnestly and constantly, that “the Spirit may be poured out upon us from on high:” that all the ministers of religion, however distinguished, may ‘be illuminated with the true knowledge and understanding of the holy word of God, and both by their life and doctrine set it forth and shew it accordingly:’ ‘that all who are called Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith, in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life:’ that purity in doctrine and practice may adorn every part of the Christian church; and that every thing, which breaks its harmony, deforms its beauty, or weakens the energy of its testimony to the truth, may be removed: that *labourers* and *faithful stewards* of God’s mysteries may be sent forth and multiplied: that an effectual stand may be made against infidelity, impiety, and every species of Antichristianity: that heavenly wisdom and grace, with every blessing, temporal and spiritual, may be abundantly conferred on our gracious Sovereign, and every branch of the royal family; on our nobles, counsellors, ministers of state, senators, magistrates, and all

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who

who possess power and influence ; and that each person, in his vocation and calling, may glorify God, and serve his generation, faithfully and effectually. Let us be very particular, frequent, and importunate in supplications to this effect : remembering, from time to time, all the different orders and descriptions of men in the nation ; the seminaries of publick or private education, especially those in which young persons are educated, on whom the charge of supporting true religion, or conducting publick business, will ere long devolve ; the plans formed for training up properly the children of the poor, preventing crimes, reforming the vicious, or alleviating misery ; and especially every plan for spreading the gospel of salvation in the world.

If laying aside all party disputes, Christians in general would cordially unite in prayers to this effect ; without any doubt, we should speedily witness a blessed change. In this manner the Apostles and disciples, (about 120 persons,) continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, from the ascension of Christ to the day of Pentecost, when “ the Spirit was poured out upon them “ from on high : ” and then in a short time, their numbers were increased to many tens of thousands, and such a revolution took place in the world, among Jews and gentiles, as a little while before must have appeared almost impossible.

Again, the preceding statement of our national mercies and situation loudly calls on every one of us to improve our advantages while they are continued to us. It may be feared, that many join the publick rejoicing for victories and success, and perhaps feel a kind of *transient natural gratitude* for preservation,
like

like that of Israel at the Red Sea, who “soon forgot
 “the works of God, and waited not for his counsel.”
 (Pf. cv. 12—14.)—And am I not even now addressing
 myself to many individuals, who are very eager for
 news, warm in disputing about politics, elated by vic-
 tories, alarmed and dejected by defeats; but who still
 continue to trample on the commandments and neglect
 the great salvation of God. To every person of this
 description I would say, Poor deluded mortal! “Despise
 “est thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance,
 “and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness
 “of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy
 “hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto
 “thyself wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation
 “of the righteous judgment of God, who will render
 “to every man according to his works?”—“The end
 “of all things is at hand.”—“Behold the Judge stand-
 “eth at the door.”—“For what is your life? it is
 “even a vapour which continueth a little while, and
 “then vanisheth away.” And what will national
 deliverances and success avail, when God shall say,
 “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of
 “thee.”—To persons of this description, (alas, it is most
 lamentable to observe how they every where abound,)
 I would with all earnestness and affection say, “Seek
 “ye the Lord, while he may be found: Call ye upon
 “him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his
 “way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let
 “him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy
 “upon him, and to our God and he will abundantly
 “pardon.” “Behold now is the accepted time! be-

“ hold now is the day of salvation.” Nay, though it is a day of holy joy to believers, I would also add,
 “ Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep : let your laughter
 “ be turned into mourning, and your joy into heaviness : humble yourselves under the mighty hand of
 “ God, that he may exalt you in due time.”

Should the Lord give us up to deserved ruin, and deprive us of our invaluable, but alas, greatly despised, religious advantages ; the loss would most awefully be felt in the event, not by those who prize and improve them, but by you who neglect them, and who are now the least concerned about their preservation. Hear therefore the words of the Saviour and Judge of the world,
 “ Yet a little while is the Light with you: walk while ye
 “ have the Light ; lest darkness come upon you ; for
 “ he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he
 “ goeth. While ye have the Light believe in the Light,
 “ that ye may be the children of Light.”

The believer likewise should earnestly be called upon to improve his advantages, while they are continued ; not only in “ giving diligence to make his calling and
 “ election sure ;” but in “ doing good to all men,” as he has opportunity and ability ; “ Redeeming the time,
 “ because the days are evil.” It would be absurd, my brethren, to pray for blessings on our beloved country, without using proper means in order to secure those blessings. An example of quiet and peaceable subjection, and the use of all our influence to promote union and order, should accompany our prayers for preservation from domestick disturbances : and still more important is it that our prayers, for spiritual blessings,
 should

should be followed by the improvement of our several talents, to promote the cause of Christianity in our several circles. It seems evident, on scriptural principles, that the company of real believers, who unite in prayer for the land, constitutes its best security in these alarming times : and in proportion as they understand and perform their several parts consistently ; the number of them may be expected to increase. While therefore, they to whom the care of *outwardly* providing for our national defence, are sedulously employed, in enlisting and disciplining foldiers, and manning our navy, by which the force of the nation becomes gradually more formidable : it is our concern to use every means of increasing the number of true Christians, and of promoting their edification ; that these peaceful warriors may be multiplied, and rendered more expert and prompt in the use of their spiritual armour. If every real believer should, in the course of a few years, be an instrument of adding but one or two to this company ; the number would soon be doubled or trebled. If every faithful minister should be prospered, besides his other usefulness, in calling forth one or two to preach the gospel fully and effectually ; what a progress might we expect to make in a course of time ! And if Christians in general were better acquainted with every part of their holy religion ; they would much more edify one another, and “ let their light shine more “ before men.”

Parents, masters of families, and all especially who have influence over others, should diligently study the duties of their several relations, and earnestly pray to be enabled

enabled properly to fulfil them. They should be very assiduous in correcting whatever is faulty in their own conduct and tempers, and in exhibiting genuine Christianity in its native beauty by their examples ; while they endeavour by their conversation and every suitable means, to recommend it to others. The effect of such a plan, if generally adopted and cordially entered on by all real Christians, would probably in the course of a few years be immense.— This, this, my brethren is the grand thing wanting among us : *the revival of religion must begin in the church* : and when they who preach and profess the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, shall with one consent make it their leading aim to “ let their conversation be, as it becometh the gospel of Christ ;” while “ they stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, “ striving together for the faith of the gospel ;” I have no doubt but a general and rapid spread of true religion will be witnessed ; notwithstanding all the *conspiracies of infidels*, or the efforts and expectations of such as sedulously devise to substitute a more *philosophical* system in the room of the doctrine of God our Saviour. Indeed, whenever it shall please the Lord to enlarge the boundaries of his church, according to the prophecies of his holy word ; he will, we may be confident, previously purify her from all false doctrine, superstition, and iniquity ; and rouse his people from lukewarmness ; take them off from unprofitable disputes ; cure them of their propensity to make some doctrines, that are much controverted but ill understood, an excuse for neglecting their most evident duties ; and excite them to improve their several talents to the glory of his name.

Let

Let me further observe, my brethren, that the principle, on which I have attempted to explain the dealings of providence in respect of this nation, is no other than *that of Christianity itself*: so that every true believer, reviewing his past experience and conduct, will perceive and thankfully acknowledge, that the Lord “hath wrought,” in respect of him, “for his own name’s sake;” and will be able to form the sentiment into a powerful plea, in prayer for all that is yet wanting to complete his salvation; and to enable him through life, to act consistently with his profession, and to be “steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, as knowing that his labour is not in vain in the Lord.”—Whatever wisdom, or ability is necessary to the magistrate, the minister, the parent, the head of a family, or the man possessed of wealth and influence, in order to fill up his station to the honour of the gospel; he may on this ground confidently expect it, in answer to his prayers, notwithstanding his conscious unworthiness: because the *glory of the Lord* is concerned in the conduct of every individual who professes his truth; which will be dishonoured, yea, blasphemed, among unbelievers if he act inconsistently with his profession.

To conclude, it is not necessary, that I should speak particularly to you, my brethren, on the way in which we ought to celebrate a day of publick thanksgiving. The disciple of Christ cannot mistake *carnal mirth for humble gratitude*. My *rejoicing*, for the most seasonable and important victories, must be mingled with sympathetick tears on account of the numbers, whether friends

or

or foes, who are bowed down with a load of sorrow for events connected with our national success. This cannot consist with *boisterous exulting joy* : but it suits with the spirit of *reflecting admiring gratitude*, and tends to preserve the mind from every extreme.

Though unable, from peculiar circumstances, to adopt the same plan ; yet I cannot but bear my testimony on this occasion to the conduct of those ministers and congregations, who accompany their grateful tribute of adoring praises to our gracious God, with publick collections, for the relief of the widows and orphans of those our defenders who have fallen in battle, or for other charitable purposes. A hint is sufficient : your individual liberality may supply the want of a publick contribution : and the money that numbers spend in intemperate feasting, and other customary expressions of joy ; if employed in relieving distress, and making glad the heart of the sorrowful, as the genuine effect of evangelical principles, will be “ fruit which shall abound
“ to your own account ;” yea, it will be, “ a sacrifice,
“ acceptable, well-pleasing unto God,” through Christ Jesus our Lord ; to whom, with the Father and the eternal Spirit, the One God of our salvation, be ascribed glory and honour, praise and thanksgiving, for ever and ever, Amen.

THE END.

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